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# LETTER

FROM A

PATRIOT in RETIREMENT,

To the Right Honourable

Mr. WILLIAM PITT,

Upon the Resigning of his Employment.

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*Hoc caverat mens provida Reguli,*

*Dissentientis conditionibus*

*Foedis, et exemplo trahenti*

*Perniciem veniens in Ævum.*

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“ Fear, admitted into public Counsels,

“ Betrays like Treason.”

Addison's Cato

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L O N D O N:

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## Bookfeller to the Reader.

**I** am order'd to inform the Public, that great part of this pamphlet was in the press a month ago : but the finishing and publication of it have been retarded, by a very disagreeable accident, that immediately happen'd in the author's family.

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S I R,

THOUGH the news-writers, to  
T the great reproach of the govern-  
ment, pretend to tell us what  
passes in the cabinet, as confidently and  
familiarily as if they were members of it ;  
I desire to avail myself no farther of pub-  
lic rumour, than is necessary to make ap-  
posite, the *Latin* motto I have prefixed to  
this trifling lucubration. And if, as we  
are informed, the schism in his Majesty's  
councils, has been created by a continuance  
of that spirit in your's, to which we stand  
indebted for the many advantages we have  
gained over our enemies ; the propriety  
of the quotation, and your right to be sur-

B named

named the *English Regulus*, become equally unquestionable.

The description I have taken the liberty to give of myself as a patriot, in this address to you, is as little fictitious, as any thing else you will find there. I am a most unfeigned friend to my country; and have asserted my claim to that character, in the present instance, as a collateral proof of my being your's. For to love my country, and not to love you, who have been the greatest benefactor to it ever yet known, would be a kind of paradox. Your desire to be a man of business, and, when occasion offer'd, of signalizing yourself in the service of the public, shewed itself, from your very youth, to be a ruling inclination in you. Accordingly, you applied



plied yourself to the business of parliament, as soon as ever you had got a seat there : wisely foreseeing, that a thorough knowledge of those matters could not fail to prove a corner-stone to your noble ambition. Your progress in it was rapid, and your diligence, which made it so, indefatigable. But a thorough disapprobation, at that time, both of men and measures, and your bold avowal of it, was, for many years, such a check to your pursuit, that a less determined spirit, would have hardly kept sight of its illustrious object : by which is meant, some future possession of a power in this country, obtained with honour, and supported with abilities. Yet, on the other hand, the steadfast opposition you gave to them, shewed, that you was not only endued

with the unfashionable virtue of self-denial; but even capable of suffering (to use a scripture phrase) for righteousness sake. Your commission, when you had little else to live upon, became a forfeit to your inflexibility.——

As every thing that bears your name, at this time, will be sufficient to excite the curiosity of the public; it is to be presumed, that I shall have some readers beside yourself. For which reason, I thought it proper, to give this short account of your conduct, upon your first outset in life; in order to their better judging, whether you have been guilty of any deviations from your pristine doctrines, tenets, or purposes, in the subsequent parts of it. And what appearances soever there may  
be

be against you, the presumptions at least in your favour will remain too strong to be easily got over, by a dispassionate and candid examiner. It is my own opinion, that truly great minds are pretty near as immutable, as the great *mind* of all. A consistency of character and behaviour, is the natural result of such immutability. Pride, puncto, and a sense of honour, will produce it in certain men; but in those of elevated spirits, it is a native principle. Yet, supposing you to be as frail as malice could wish to find, or envy represent you; I would be glad to ask any of the hasty railers at the last step you have taken, whether there is the least semblance of probability, that any person, even of an inferior understanding to your own, after being raised to such an exalted  
pitch

pitch in the estimation of the people, should become at once, a kind of political suicide ; and eclipse, himself, ~~of~~ that glory and lustre, which he was conscious that nothing else could overshadow. I can, however, no longer dwell upon the charge of a demerit in you, grounded only on surmise and inuendo ; perceiving rather an additional impatience in me, to enter upon the more pleasing subject of your merits, which will neither admit of doubt or contradiction. I shall not trouble you, good Sir, with many words ; because your modesty will make you better pleased with few. Besides, *pauca, sed arguté*, is a lesson I would recommend to the observance of all scribblers. The first part of the precept, we may with ease conform to ; I fear the latter is above me.

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Although a merit that speaks for itself, seems to require no other advocate or voucher ; yet your friends at least, may not be displeased, with the short comparison I am about to make, between the present state of the war, and the inglorious circumstances attending the commencement of it.

The French, as you know, Sir, having committed a most outrageous trespass upon the frontiers of *Nova Scotia* ; a proper representation was made of it to our ministers : who, as I have been told, repented it most highly, and immediately sent over very spirited remonstrances to the court of *France*, for so open and unexpected a violation of a treaty, but newly made with them. Happily for us,  
their

their dispatches proved fruitless and ineffectual. I say happily, because it shews, that their counsels have been as weakly directed as their arms. For, if they had had the dexterity and foresight of the *Spaniards*, in the year thirty-nine; (who, by the by, may be doing the same thing now) they would not only have disavowed their governor in his proceedings, and pleaded ignorance of them; but offered, as an evidence of their sincerity, to have recalled, and punished him.

By this dissimulation, they had gained time sufficient, not barely to put themselves into a posture of defence, but to have got together such a force in those parts as our utmost efforts would not have enabled us to resist. Besides, the assailant,  
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in such cases, having ever an advantage over his enemy, from the secret consciousness of those designs, whereof the other can seldom be aware ; the providing of the country with every thing necessary to make it a place of arms, would not have been the only use made of such an interval. For during the suspension of their intended rupture, no arts had been unpractised, no means had been left untried, towards extending their interest and influence amongst the *Indians*. These had been very important points gained : and as we know by experience, that a *French* council is not above such an insidious piece of policy, it has really surprized me, that the policy should be above the council.

I never read *Pere Charlevoix* myself; but have been told by one who has, that in some treatise of his, upon the subject in question, that reverend author had let slip from his pen an unwary truth: by asserting, as I am informed, “ that the  
 “ interests of *France* and *England*, in  
 “ *North America*, were utterly incom-  
 “ patible.” Such a declaration was alone sufficient to alarm this country: as it demonstrated, that, sooner or later, we were necessarily to expect, that arduous contest between the two nations, for sole dominion there, in which, I thank heaven and you, we have made so glorious a figure. I am just discerning enough to know, Sir, that things great in themselves, require no aggrandizing: and this reasoning, forbids me alike, either to  
 magnify



magnify the conquest, or to flatter you: but the entire reduction of that vast empire, (for so it may be called) is a most stupendous atchievement.

I shall take this occasion, as the most proper, to assure you, most solemnly to assure you, that whatever may fall from my pen, of the encomiastic kind, will be as ingenuous as your own upright heart. As I have never been the slave of any man, I have not condescended either to be the flatterer of any man; which is a species of creature *below* a slave: because a flatterer is a self-created reptile.——I shall now pursue my story.

The court of *France*, as I had observed, having excited at once our jealousy and indignation, by a most audacious infraction of their very last treaty of peace with us ; their inattention to the expediency of retrieving so unadvised a step, by all the most specious blinds and fallacies they could invent ; I will take upon me to say again, was a most fortunate event : the issue of our quarrel has proved it so : for had the contention been reserved for a work of future times, I scarce perceive a possibility, that the vanquished could then have failed of being the conquerors. Yet our own court, instead of availing themselves of this oversight, by an immediate declaration of war, allowed them ample time both to see and rectify their mistake. We had, it is true, just resolution enough  
to

to make some reprisals on the enemy; but then all the ships we took, for want of a more formal annunciation of hostilities, were represented as so many acts of piracy: and the honour of the nation was so far from being vindicated by this measure, that it became daily exposed to fresh impeachments. It is *Tacitus*'s, I think, who says, “ that certain war is preferable to  
 “ uncertain peace, as being a state of  
 “ greater security\* :” but our ministers were not of that opinion. A descent however, being actually made upon the island of *Minorca*, this matter grew a little more serious; and war was at last declared, with all the pomp and parade usually attending such ceremonies. Admiral *Byng* was appointed to the command of  
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\* *Securius Bellum*, pace dubiâ.

the squadron going to its relief; and nobody had the least doubt, (except himself) but we should make our enemies repent of their hazardous enterprize. The sequel, alas! is too horrid for remembrance; and as the shortest will be the best account, for all true lovers of their country, of his ignominious behaviour, it may suffice, to tell them, that the place was lost in consequence of it. And yet, when I seem to impute the loss of *Port Mahon*, entirely to this unfortunate gentleman, I ought to explain myself: because, in fact, he was but an accessory to it. The disappearance of the fleet, and Colonel *Jeffreys's* being surprized and taken prisoner, had a little alarmed and dismayed the garrison; but the military people then said, and still say, that these were no reasons  
for

for so hasty a surrender of it. Why such honours were heaped upon the governor when he came home, is a secret beyond the reach of my shallow penetration: and yet I will do him the justice to say, that a worthier gentleman never wore them. The conjecture that strikes me most, and therefore satisfies me best, is, that our rulers, in order to avoid the reproach of leaving so important a trust in the hands of an infirm and aged person, obtained for him these extraordinary marks of his majesty's favour, as a proof, not only of their entire approbation of his conduct, but of their conviction, that a younger and more active commander could not have done better. But the real truth is, if they would confess, and a virtual confession of  
it

it there was \*, that this very considerable possession of ours, had, unhappily, employed the thoughts and attention of none but our enemies. For, admitting that we had not the means of providing for its outward defence, from a want of ships sufficient for that purpose ; yet the smallest addition of internal strength given to it, by reinforcing of the garrison, would have obliged the enemy to raise the siege ; and we had triumphed instead of the assailants. If what I am saying, seems to cast the least reflection upon any man, the person so affected, is to thank himself for his mortification. He will find, that the defect was in the object ; for there is no foulness in his mirror. *Fari ut possit quæ sentiat*, is a right that every man of spirit,

\* The resignation of several great employments.

spirit, will not only assert, but exercise. I have a very unfeigned love and regard for certain gentlemen concerned in the administration at that time : and if *Palineurus* fell asleep, there were those about him, who ought to have waked him. It is my firm opinion, that an abler, better, or more experienced man, has very rarely filled his office.——

I have already premised, good Sir, that my little animadversions upon these matters, were not, could not be intended, for the information of a person so capable as yourself, of making more useful and judicious reflections upon them. What I had to say of yourself, I thought would not be the worse received, for being said to you. For the rest, I am only taking the freedom,

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dom, to make you a kind of middle man between me and the public ; for the information of whom, I have undertaken this irksome, and, it may be, thankless task.

Not very long ago, being unwarily drawn into a new dispute, in relation to the disgrace we had suffered in the *Mediterranean*, and the dire consequences of it; a disagreeable incident happened to me in the debate, a bare recollection whereof, urges me to enlarge a little upon it : and although Mr. *Byng*'s subject cannot but be hideous from the nature, and tedious from the triteness of it ; you will pardon me, I dare say, for recurring to the detested topic. Amongst other things, I said I had been told, that a certain great personage,  
who



who is now no more, had called him a poltroon, without hearing, or desiring to hear, any other proof of his misbehaviour, than his own letter. His name being afterwards mentioned, not contemptuously, but irreverently enough to give me offence ; I shall bring together such a deal of presumptive evidence, in support of the validity of his charge, as may prevent, for the future, any body's telling me, that it was *unwarrantable*.

This gentleman, you are to know, Sir, commanded a fleet in the *Mediterranean* last war. His commission being doubly suitable to his temper, it pleased him doubly. He found the *Mediterranean* extremely like the more southern ocean ; for it proved a rich, and a *pacific* sea. For

these reasons, during the whole course of the present war, he never once solicited to be employed, unless he could have the same station. He obtained a promise of it accordingly, which, to our sorrow, as well as to his own, was fatally fulfilled. But times and circumstances being altered, there appeared a correspondent change too, in the mind of the Admiral. He had no sooner got on board, but he began to make woeful complaints and lamentations, that he was going to be *sacrificed*. When this apprehension was removed, or rather, obviated, by assurances given him, that he would be at least as strong as the enemy ; he had recourse to other objections, by arraigning Lord *Anson*, for sending him out with the worst men in the whole navy ; and this, before he could  
possibly

possibly have examined them. The extraordinary time he took, for providing the ships with water, at *Gibraltar*, gave room to suspect, that part of it might be spent in making his own \*. But the more probable reason, to speak seriously, was, that he hoped, by this delay, to give the *French* Admiral so many more chances to hear of his approach : in consequence of which, he was not without some expectation, that he would try to avoid him by a retreat.

We are come now to the desperate engagement, in which our tongue-doughty commander, as well as his friends, declared that he had beaten the adverse fleet ;  
 though

\* The gentlemen of the navy tell me, that the first impressions of fear among the common sailors, shew themselves by profuse evacuations of this sort.

though he had notoriously left them in possession of all they wanted; which was covering the siege of *Philipsburgh*. But notwithstanding our unfortunate chief was so wary in fight, he was very unwary in counsel : for he contradicted himself the next day. By which we have reason to apprehend, that his head was not much better than his heart. Having called a council of war upon this occasion, the first question, I believe, that he moved to the board, was, whether, if he returned to the charge, and attacked the enemy again, they thought it would be of any great service ? It was decided in the negative. But it may not be improper to observe in this place, that a routed or shattered fleet, seldom remains in the way of being beaten a second time. Another query which Mr.

President

President put to the council, was, whether a total defeat of the *French* squadron, could be any ways conducive to the saving of *Port Mahon* ? And it was agreed that it certainly would not. But the fallacy of this argument, is too glaring to pass unnoticed : for the same reason would have held good, for not attacking Mr. Galiffionere, if he had met him in the channel. Our Admiral, I confess, was universally reputed a good mariner ; but such a testimonial gives no idea at all, of his qualifications for a commander. Though seamanship might be of use to him in directing his ship, it no ways enables a man to direct himself. But if we should discover, that this very able seaman, had acted most notoriously unlike a seaman ; it will bespeak no want of candour, to conclude  
 he

he had his private reason for it. Now, the renowned Mr. *Boscawen*, Sir, on being properly informed of the disposition made by Admiral *Byng* that day, and his approaches to the enemy; and being asked whether he approved of it; very modestly made answer, that he *believed* he should have formed his attack in another manner. I think I can pretty perfectly relate what he said, though I do not perfectly understand it. He should have chosen, he said, to have gone up in a line of battle a-head, to some appointed distance, from which he would have given his Captains orders to depart, like a file of musqueteers: by which means, all his own ships had been equi-distant from those they were respectively to oppose, on the side of the enemy.

But

But this would not have served our hero's purpose. His business was to come within the letter of fighting, and not within the letter of cowardice. And although I am no seaman, I think, I may venture to pronounce, that he never, in all his life, trimmed, or steered a vessel, to so critical a nicety.

Though I shall, probably, never be in the way of hearing your sentiments of this well meant address to you ; yet I shall flatter myself with the secret persuasion, of having given you a most thorough conviction, that there were some symptoms at least, of pusillanimity about this man. But the first person in the kingdom, (who was, of course, the most immediately and sensibly affected by his misdemeanour)

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having been blamed for giving a prejudicate opinion upon the case ; I shall certainly be very cautious of saying, that Mr. *Byng* acted like a coward ; but I will for ever say, and insist upon it, that a coward would have acted like Mr. *Byng*. And yet, the very best evidence of all remains still behind. For many of the seamen, who were allowed to go ashore at *Gibraltar*, in order to refresh themselves ; as soon as ever they understood, that this flagitious transaction had been taken cognizance of at home, and the Admiral was to be put under arrest, made no scruple to insult him in the street ; by asking him, in derision, “ why he did not go, and “ bury his dead.” Which humourous piece of irony, seems strongly to denote, that he had taken all due care, not to be  
in



in the bills of mortality, upon so trivial an occasion.

This relation, I fear, may have been somewhat tedious : but the person who is the subject of it, (though a most execrable actor) having had so considerable a part, in the tragical scene I am exhibiting; it seemed sufficiently to coincide with my general design, not to be thought wholly impertinent. Besides, I have reason to think, that I cannot but have told the reader some few things, which persons, less inquisitive and sollicitous than myself, about all national concerns, could not have told him. If the wrath I perceive in myself against the poor man, had been kindled in me by any other cause, than his not being a man, I could with ease

have curbed it. But he that has publicly suffered death, for having betrayed the interests of his King and Country, may very fairly be regarded, as a personal enemy, of all true lovers of them. That character I have assumed, and would invariably adhere to it, at any hazard. A luke-warm patriot, like a luke-warm friend, may make parade and boast of his affection; but its efficiency, in point of services, I doubt, would not be great. Though the present times do not appear the aptest for such a confession, I will own to you, Sir, that I have a little tincture of enthusiasm in my composition: and, urged by the irresistible influence of it, I have indulged my resentment of Mr. *Byng*'s offence, with great scope: yet not from any hatred I bore to him, but from an abhorrence of his crime.

crime. Nor had I, perhaps, disturbed the ashes of the dead at all, but with a view, and hope, of giving consolation to the living: by which I mean, those few of his judges, who, from misconceived sentiments of humanity, had felt a little compunction about the sentence past upon him. Had I the pleasure to be better known to those gentlemen, they would know too, that there is not a man on earth, of a less fierce or sanguinary disposition than myself: yet I take this occasion to aver, that had I been one of them, I could have condemned him, not only without scruple, but without regret. Nay more; my enmity would have followed him, even to the grave. Mr. *Addison*, I remember, puts a most heroic ejaculation into the mouth of his *Cato*, when he is surveying  
the

the body of his slaughtered son, by making him say, “ what pity ’tis, that we can “ die but once to serve our country ? ”

Whether such a sentiment is not a little too refined, to be the suggestion of nature, I shall not take upon me to decide : but it is really a pity, in my opinion, that a man can die but once, for diserving his country.

After having closed my evidence, and apologized for protracting it into so great a length ; the asking leave to subjoin one other circumstance, may somewhat surprize you. It is not at all relative to the Admiral’s crime, but to his character, very much so : because it will discover in him, a thorough depravity of heart. As you sat many years in parliament with  
this

this gentleman, where you have seen him daily passing and repassing through the house; I am persuaded, he did not escape your notice. And if your insight into men, be only half as quick as your penetration into other matters; you could not but observe, that nature herself seemed to have marked him, for all unnatural things.

The circumstance at which I have already hinted, and am about to tell you, is, that when Admiral *Matthews* was tried for some irregularities in his conduct, whilst he commanded in the *Mediterranean*, Mr. *Byng* was president of the court-martial; and this blood-thirsty warrior, whom we have proved to be cautious at least of shedding his own, when he came to sum up the evidence, and make report of it, departed

parted from the accustomed form and method of such tribunals, of asking first, *seriatim*, the sentiments of the other judges upon it, by prematurely declaring it to be his opinion, “ that Mr. *Matthews’s* offences were capital, and he ought to suffer death.” I think that the warmest of Mr. *Byng’s* friends will not offer to extenuate so enormous a proceeding.

The doctrine of Providence, Sir, I mean a special Providence, in the direction of human affairs, is attended with so much doubt and perplexity; I am not become sufficiently master of this point of religious faith, to be able to say, that I have attributed a great deal to it. But were I a more firm believer of the hypothesis, I could with very little difficulty be persuaded,

suaded, that the fate to which this infatuated wretch had at last exposed himself, was an operation of the divine will, in the way of retribution, for the cruel wrong he had attempted to do that gallant officer. When I call him so, I speak with authority; for Sir *Charles Wager*, in characterising him, expressed himself figuratively upon the occasion : by saying, “ that he was stout, but when he came into  
 “ action, he was not sure, that he had quite  
 “ ballast enough in him : ” meaning, by this metaphor, to intimate, that his courage was unquestionable, though he had not altogether the same assiance in his conduct.

Too conscious, Sir, of my tedious detention of you in the *Mediterranean*, a sea so unpropitious to our arms ; I shall carry

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you



you a long voyage, in a very short time, by transporting you at once to *North America*; where our miscarriages were not less alarming or disgraceful, though, ultimately, not so fatal. Of the gentlemen employed upon that service, we were most beholden to those who were most inactive: they that did the least, did the best: yet the *vis inertiae*, is certainly not a force, calculated for making conquests. I wish that Mr. *Braddock* had been a better General, though I had been so much worse a prophet: for I foretold, that if he met with any difficulty, he would indubitably be foiled and brought to shame. 'Twas thought, that he had never considered his calling as a matter of art and science, in all his life. He was extremely superficial, and yet proud, opinionative, and overbearing :



ing : had never liked his profession, nor did any of his profession like him. This last article of his disqualification, for the very important trust reposed in him, deserved, alone, a little more attention, than seemed to have been paid it : for I presume, a thorough confidence in its leader, is the very life and soul of an army. Supposing a General to be a thorough able man, I confess, indeed, that the sensible part of the officers who are to serve under him, may, without esteeming him, have that implicit reliance on his conduct, so apparently requisite, to promote the service. But this is not the case of the common soldier, who is to be governed by his affections, and not his reason. The heart of such a wretch, will ever be best reconciled to his desperate work, when the

commander is in possession of it. Talking of Mr. *Braddock* one day to a gentleman, who, during his short command in the *East Indies*, did himself so much honour there; he could not help saying, that I seemed to have known him very thoroughly. The exposing his army to be surprized and baffled by a small detachment of the enemy's, consisting chiefly of *Indians*, was owing, 'tis said, to his obstinate refusal to take with him any irregulars of that sort; though it was generally thought, that they would have been of the utmost use to him, by skirting his troops during their march, and keeping off an enemy, that, as he had managed matters, gave them great annoyance, and, almost, without making themselves visible\*. But his  
conduct

\* This happened in passing the river *Ohio*.

conduct subsequent to the consternation, which he saw the whole army thrown into, examined by the test of common sense, seemed very preposterous. What could be expected of poor creatures, agitated by a terror, so naturally scattered among them, from beholding, at one time, an officer falling before them, and, at another, their right or left hand man? and to quicken their resentment of this horrid slaughter, it was made by an enemy, on whom there was not a possibility of their making any reprisals. For these reasons; As soon as ever the General had tried all means of forming, or getting them forwards, and saw the impracticability of either, the advisable part next, was, surely, to get them back again: and, as he could not remove the panic, to re-  
move

move the men. I have been told, notwithstanding, that some hours had past, before he was sensible of the expediency of making his retreat.—Being an exceeding gallant man, I wish most sincerely, that he had survived this unfortunate encounter ; for he had spent the greatest part of his life, in very distressful circumstances ; and pretty soon after they were become more easy, he lost it. I know not how true it is, but I have been told, that when he was made Captain General of all his Majesty's forces in *North-America*, he never before had had the command of five hundred men, upon any occasion whatever. A Colonel's commission, is not to be admitted as a disproof of this assertion ; because a man's being at  
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the head of a regiment at home, is no executive command, most undoubtedly.

War, and the calamitous consequences of it, making a part of those unavoidable evils, to which the human passions have subjected societies; and the issue and decisions of it, being of the utmost importance to us : how peculiarly cautious ought our ministers to be, in the choice of those persons, with whom they intrust the care and conduct of our military operations. And I am of opinion, that the knowledge of men's characters and abilities, with a proper direction of our enquiries, is not so difficult to come at, as is generally thought. And yet, you want not to be told, my good Sir, that in another instance, beside the present, we suffered a most ignominious

minious defeat, where we ought to have obtained a compleat victory. \*

By the foregoing account, Sir, I seem to have but shifted the scene, without changing my representation. The fatality that had attended our misdoings in the other hemisphere, appeared to have made alliance with us, and accompanied our forces to *America*. We had been before dispossessed of our strength at *Oswego*, and now failed of the reprisal we hoped to make, by an attempt upon *Fort du Quesne*. What I am relating, is from my memory only, and that a bad one ; but I think the other divisions of our army, though conducted by gentlemen of sufficient skill and prowess, through the infinite difficulties and obstacles, necessarily attending  
all

\* At *Ticonderoga*

all military operations in such a country, had done little or nothing. Under the noble Lord who was next appointed to the command of the forces, and allowed to be very capable ; our army, to the best of my remembrance, made no movement at all. That, and every thing else, for I know not how long, remained in a state of utter inaction.

His Lordship, however, having at last received his Majesty's orders, to make a descent at *Cape Breton*, and to take with him such a part of the troops, as he should think sufficient for the enterprize ; as soon as the transports could be got ready, he set out upon this important expedition. But the General thinking it advisable to have the opinions of a council of war, (which

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scarce

scarce ever fail to end in counsels of peace) an assembly of this sort was accordingly convened, in order to deliberate upon his Majesty's instructions. And the result of the consultation, in effect, was ; that the sense of his council at home, was not the sense of his council abroad ; for they were unanimously of opinion, that the laying siege to *Louisburg*, was too hazardous an undertaking, to be attempted with any good effect to the service. His Lordship, in consequence of this resolution, abandoned the enterprize, and returned to the place from whence he came. This cruel disappointment, however, of the good King's, as well as the nation's hopes, helped to verify the paradoxical position I set out with ; which was, that we never did so well for ourselves, as when we were  
 doing



doing nothing. For, during this fruitless, but not expenceless expedition, the enemy availed themselves of our General's absence, and took fort *William Henry*, upon the lake *George*; which could not otherwise have been lost. General *Webb*, not having received the succours he expected from the colonies, could not afford to send any to the neighbouring garrison: apprehending, that the force he had with him, was barely sufficient for the security of fort *Edward*: which was the only barrier, or place of defence remaining, to prevent the enemy's immediate entrance into *Albany*.  
 —If you have thought it worth your while, Sir, to attend to this mortifying relation, from beginning to end; a remark I have made upon it to myself, may, possibly, have occurred to you: which is,

that we made war, before we declared it, and, as soon as we had declared it, ceased to make it.

Into this helpless, hopeless, and groveling state were we sunk, when the good genius of the nation called you forth, to attend and assist its councils : and seemed to tell us, that the *revocare gradum*, was a task and honour reserved for Mr. Pitt. You took upon you the *Herculean* labour, and have performed it in a manner, that has astonished all the world. I am aware, that I have expressed myself upon this occasion, in an uncommon way : yet not from any affectation of figurative and pompous phrase ; but from thinking you a very uncommon man. I might, from my own breast derive one proof, that you cannot

cannot but have some great peculiarities belonging to you; because I both love and envy you extremely : which are affections, that few have ever reconciled,

Having taken notice, in general terms, of the wondrous success of our arms, under your auspicious guidance of them : to enumerate the particular conquests, and acquisitions, would, doubtless, be thought a work of supererogation. The children in the streets, can recount our glorious spoils; and their children's children will revere you for them. I shall, therefore, turn my thoughts, at present, to the horriest subject that ever employed them : I mean the very unnatural and ungrateful requital you have met with. I do not scruple to aver, abstractedly from the partiality I may have

have towards you, that any attempt to traduce a character and fame like yours, appears to me a crime, not greatly inferior to blasphemy: especially, as the offender would be guilty only of a foolish piece of impiety, in one instance; and might do an irreparable injury in the other. But censure, says the famous Doctor *Swift*, is a tax which all merit pays to the publick: and if this, like most other assessments, is proportioned to what we possess, you are not to wonder, Sir, that you have been so highly rated. I acknowledge myself, notwithstanding, to be less disagreeably affected, by the personal injury done to you, than by the dreadful apprehension I have conceived, of the mischievous tendency, to the whole, of that spirit of envy, so very  
rife

rise amongst us, that it is almost become an universal passion. Poor virtue, is already in such a languid and declining state, that she wants every cordial and provocative that can possibly be administered, if we wish her to recover : she has not the least chance to live, if we suffer her to be brought lower. Now, fame, my good Sir, being the prime incentive to great and virtuous deeds ; whatever is said, or done, towards lessening the object, in the mind of its pursuer, has a tendency to deprive the publick, of the advantages arising to ourselves, from so laudable an ambition. For they that, animated by your example, might hereafter have become candidates for this noble prize ; upon finding it of so precarious a tenure, would be apt to think the lubricious possession, no longer worthy,

thy, either of their care, or emulation. when this shall come to be the case, the authors of so lamentable a catastrophe, may fairly be called traytors to the community. The treatment you yourself have lately met with, has led me to imagine, that our proverbial maxim, which holds virtue to be its own reward ; was originally grounded upon the observation, that it seldom meets with any other. And as your experience is verifying my comment upon this adage ; I hope, and trust, that your own thoughts are ministering to you, the comfort promised in the text.

In searching after the source of this fatal evil, it appeared to me to be wholly owing to the pernicious error we are in, of making dull and low-minded men learned.

ed. Blinded by a vain prepossession in favour of our own offspring, every mechanic thinks, that a Mercury may be made of *his* block, as well as another's. The poor boy, *invited Nature*, is accordingly sent to some great school : and the Pedagogue, under whom he has past his initiation, having rough-hewn the image, the deluded parent persists in his folly, and sends his idol to be finished at the university. When he returns from thence, what is to become of this misguided creature ! Why, instead of the chissel, his natural inheritance from the industrious father, he betakes himself to his pen ; but not having the talents requisite to make it either useful or entertaining, how to employ this unwieldly weapon, is the point that puzzles him. Urged, at last,

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by the little knowledge he has of human nature, and the depravity of his own, his thoughts and labors are turned entirely to abuse. Writing, Sir, in this country, is become altogether as much a trade, as any handicraft occupation whatever. And every dealer in this dirty traffic, too soon apprised of the taste of the times, and the certainty of finding in his customers, a competent portion of the same cursed passion, which prompted himself to his iniquitous work ; utters his poisonous and infectious folly to his credulous readers, with such unbounded licence, that nothing good, respectable, or sacred amongst men, is suffered to live, because they must.

One



One of these mercenary railers at you, was gotten so very low in the expressions of his malice, that, upon my veracity, I did not understand the terms he used ; he said you deserved a *shell*. After repeated enquiries about the signification of the word, I was informed at last, that it was a piece of cant at the gallows, when the friends of the person to be executed, had provided a *coffin* for him. Judge, my good Sir, whether I have not represented these pests of society very properly : when we can no longer read their scurrilous jargon, without the help of a glossary from St. Giles's.—After what I have said, concerning these inferiour drudges of the Printers ; I am sorry to tell you, that I have been acquainted with one or two

very upright, truly knowing, and able personages, who, from the like contracted circumstances, have been under the same predicament. And as I have always been a most unfeigned friend and admirer, of learned and ingenious men; had a state of affluence ever been my lot, the professions I am now making of my good will towards them, were entirely needless: for, if I know myself at all, they would have found in me, a pretty considerable patron.

I am not enough acquainted with your formation and temperament, to be able to judge at all, what impression these brutal violences may have made upon you. But lest you should be affected by them, beyond what they deserve; I beg leave  
to

to prescribe for you, an antidote to all heart-burnings so created. This famous recipe, Sir, directs you, to mix with your indignation, a double portion of contempt : which will so qualify and moderate your resentment of most things, as to make them very supportable. I am too scrupulous, to recommend to you a medicine I had not tried ; but I have very lately had occasion to make use of this, and can assure you, that it most effectually answered my purpose.

If my experience had not long ago taught me, to wonder at nothing ; how the vicissitudes in your fortune would have surprized me. The *ventosa plebs* are most happily described, by the celebrated poet who makes use of that expression,

pression, in one single epithet : because they literally veer to and fro, like the winds themselves. They that, but a month ago, thought your character the most immaculate in the world ; now fancy on a sudden, that they have discovered as many flaws and spots in it, as are to be found in an emblem of *bad fame* : whereas, if there were really any blemishes in it, they ought to have been regarded but like the spots in the sun ; which are barely left visible, by the great ascendant the brighter parts of it's body have over them. I have been told, that some of the venal, virulent crew I have been mentioning, have made it matter of wonder, that you should ever aspire at being a minister in a country like this ; where property has such an absolute influence over  
all

all things : alledging very emphatically, that you are not even a landed man ! I most heartily lament the truth they tell me, yet cannot but hope their inference is false. For if these terrestrial qualifications, are to have a preference to the most distinguished spiritual powers, in the choice of ministers ; what is to become of us ! Are you not apprehensive, Sir, when we come to be governed by gentlemen of this description only, that we shall find most of our acre-wise rulers, to be no better than wise-acres ? The danger to me appears very imminent. But the advancing of this absurd proposition, while the dominion Sir *Robert Walpole* had acquired in this country, is so fresh in our memories, makes the solæcism more glaring : for I believe it is pretty notorious,

rious, that his estate, originally, did not greatly exceed, the qualification requisite for a Knight of a shire.

You have probably observed, Sir, tho' I have occasionally rebuked, the impotent malice of the *scabies* of your slanderers, that I have not yet touched upon the subject of your more considerable accusers. My reason for it is, that when the allegations of such censors shall come in question, I intend, as well as I am able, to give answers to them all. In the mean time, I hope that neither the spite of one, or the false reasonings and suspicions of the other, will give you a moment's disquiet. Your character is above the reach, your spirit should set you above the regard of both. Your fame is so  
esta-

established, that you may defy the most malicious of its assailants. Though they come armed with the panoply of falsehood and envy, those inveterate enemies of all distinguished merit, they will find their arrows recoil, and that the object is invulnerable. I am persuaded at least, that your resentment of the outrageous indignities that have been put upon you, will neither abate of your zeal and sollicitude for the public service, or produce the least change in any part of your future conduct. Men of enlarged and liberal minds, can rest satisfied with the consciousness of having done praise-worthy actions ; the praise itself is but a secondary consideration, and therefore of less account with them. The noble sentiment Lord *Sommers*

bore about his escutcheon \*, you bear about your heart : and though your services have necessarily made you so conspicuous, your first ambition, I dare say, was to render yourself useful to society.

Perceiving myself, notwithstanding the secret pleasure that has accompanied my labour, to grow a little weary of this friendly office ; I begin to fear, that your perusal of it will not be unattended, with some similar sensations. For this reason, I shall detain you no longer now, than will be necessary to fulfil my promise, and finally release you.

The first article of the ill supported charge brought against you, is, that your  
measures,

\* Prodesse quam conspici.



measures, since you was in power, have not been conformable to your doctrines and opinions, when you was out of power. This allegation seems to imply, that although a second consideration of things is thought so advisable, as to be proverbially recommended to our practice ; you are never to change *your* opinion, under the most thorough conviction, that you have been in an error. The inference I draw from this, to shew myself as good a logician as my adversary, is, that what daily experience makes venial in one man, was not allowable in another. Within these few years, an act \* passed in one session of parliament, was repealed in the ensuing one : and yet I never heard, that the worthy gentleman, who thought fit to make this sudden alteration in his measures, in-

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curred

\* The naturalization of the *Jews*.

curred the least censure or reproach, in  
 consequence of his inconsistency. Second  
 thoughts, however, in that instance, did  
 but remedy, what a previous use of them  
 might have prevented. Nevertheless, I  
 do not mean to rest your cause upon the  
 authority of an example or two ; I can  
 produce irrefragable reasons, in behalf of  
 your conversion. Practical truths depend  
 so much upon circumstances that we are  
 to vary our conduct, according to the vari-  
 ations of them. To be able to say what  
 ought to be, we should first know what  
 is : and without intuitive powers, how  
 could you be this entire master of his Ma-  
 jesty's situation, before you was admitted  
 to a share in his counsels ? Besides, if  
 every thing desirable were immediately  
 attainable, whence arises the tedious sus-  
 pension

pension of our much longed for peace !  
 But I shall endeavour to recollect the substance of part of a speech you made about three years ago, when the continuation of the war in *Germany* came in question. Not being in the house myself, you will be pleased, Sir, to make allowance, for the deceptions to which I am liable, both from the failure of my memory, and the misleadings of my informer. One of your arguments, if I remember right, contained the most obvious and undeniable piece of good sense conceivable : which was, that if we kept any troops there at all, it was advisable to send more ; in order to effectuate the intended service of your measure : which, unexecuted, would be attended with a disservice of the most inhuman kind. You reasoned nobly, my good Sir ;  
 and

and nothing could be wanting, but a little fellow-feeling, to make every man in the kingdom think like yourself. For to suffer such brave creatures, to oppose themselves to an enemy, outnumbering them in the proportion of three to one, would have been a cruelty little inferior to a massacre. If I mistake not, you pleaded farther in vindication of yourself, that it was not then a time to tell your private thoughts of what *had* been done; but to conduct yourself suitably to the circumstances in which you found yourself, and make the best of them : that there was a concatenation of things, in respect of state matters, that did not always admit of being separately considered; for as much as the least breach in such a chain, might entirely disconcert the whole plan. If you will allow me,

Sir,

Sir, to make a short supplement, to this very well followed argumentation; I should add, that, as your own sovereign had brought himself into very distressful circumstances, by asserting the rights and liberties of his *English* subjects; and his great kinsman, in consequence of his alliance with him, into much worse; the situation of both seemed very com-miserable; and not only to deserve, but claim, the consideration of this country. But lest I should be misconceived, upon the subject of this unpopular doctrine; it may be necessary so far to explain myself, as to tell the reader, it is *pro hac vice* only, that I am an advocate for it. I most ardently wish, and not without some degree of hope, to see my good country-men come unanimously to a resolution,  
never

never more to be the champions of *Hanover*, or precipitately hurried into continental wars, upon that antiquated, visionary notion, of preserving a ballance of power in *Europe*. The ballance of power in *Europe*, is not to be maintained, by any political equation table : it is as sure to find its level, in time, as any branch of trade. But not to leave this question altogether in a problematic state ; you will permit me to remind you of the *Dutch* war, in which the weak counsels, of the weakest Prince that ever filled a throne, had involved his poor infatuated subjects. This extraordinary measure ; seems to bring home the point in debate : because it totally subverted the ridiculous system we are talking of. And yet, what was the issue of that war ; why our good old friends,

emerged

emerged from a state, almost, of annihilation; and obtained pretty near as good a peace for themselves, as if they had been conquerors. We might, nevertheless, pursue this *ignis fatuus* to a certain length, provided we did not make such vast sacrifices to the phantom. But should this erroneous principle again revive, and, upon being rendered a little more expedient and practicable, become again a state maxim; even in that case, our manner of proceeding, supposing *England* to be the grand equilibrist, would prove us fundamentally deficient in our praxis. Because every balance is brought to it's equability, by the last influence given to it : whereas, it has always been our custom to get into the scale first. Add to this, Sir, that, in forming any political system, in support whereof,

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we rely upon the assistance of other powers, deemed reciprocally benefitted by it, we shall often be deceived. It cannot but happen, that the parties to such an association, allured, at different times, by views of a more immediate interest, will renounce their confederacy; the scheme of the projector, end like that of an alchemist; and the deviser of it find himself, the bubble of his own chimaera. I think, ere now, that you have anticipated the drift of this little episode: which has been, ultimately, to remind you, of the main condition of our last treaty of peace with *France*. By the restoring of *Cape Breton*, which was all we had got in the last war, we procured peace and restitution for both our allies: whose manner of requiting us, for their signal  
and



and unexpected redemption, is never to be forgotten : *Holland*, in the beginning of the present war, having been something worse than neutral ; and the Queen of *Hungary*, immediately meditating and contriving the destruction of our great confederate. The object you perceive, Sir, under our present consideration, was, in this instance, totally lost sight of ; and seemed to have no more real existence in it, than the scales in the *Zodiac* : for the two forementioned states, were formerly the most considerable of our balance-masters. — A query, whether any thing so vague and fluctuating, as the point in question, be worthy of our further attention, is the natural conclusion of my theorem. —

I am at last returned, to a subject much more interesting, though, in itself, less pleasing: being about to tell you, that your mortal sin, with the *public*, is your having taken a pension. To which I answer, that the principle of self-denial is a virtue that we may with ease lay claim to, while we assert it only at the expence of others: but it is indubitably the case, wherein speculation and practice, will always differ most. And I am as much convinced, as I am of my being, that of all the carping, cavilling multitude, who have condemn'd you for taking this pension, not a single man would have himself refused it. It is farther to be observed, that, on the one hand, not a soul was interested, in your declining his Majesty's bounteous offer; and, on the other, that nature, honour, and com-

mon

mon prudence, jointly called upon you to accept it. 'Tis the business, I shall not express myself improperly, if I say it is the duty of every man, to make the best of his being, in his natural capacity ; and the most of his abilities, in his social one. The exertion of your abilities, Sir, we have so sensibly felt, that the whole nation have expressed their sense of them : but your virtuous labours being seemingly at an end ; we are, at present, very modestly and gratefully requiring of you, to leave yourself, the only person, unbene-fitted by them. The urgency of your provocation to withdraw yourself from council, is sufficiently evinced, by the sacrifice you made, to your resentment of what was doing there, For if, upon mercenary motives, you resigned an employment

ployment of five or six thousand pounds a-year, for a pension of three ; you may be a great Statesman, Sir, but you are a most sorry Arithmetician.

The imputation next attempted to be fixed upon you, is, that you have been too absolute and headstrong : which article of your impeachment, is partly admitted, and in part denied. That you have *not* been absolute, we have reason to lament ; but that you are headstrong, we allow. Our enemies have felt that strength, the nation has applauded, your king requited, and only your competitors for power, decried it.

This relation having been interspersed with many marks of my partiality for  
you ;

you ; you will easily believe, that the giving you up in any point, cannot fail to be attended with great mortification to me. And yet, there is a part of your indictment still remaining, to which I could say very little for you : I mean, the insupportable expences of this war. For if you had subdued (as, to be sure, you might have done) the most formidable power in *Europe*, without the use of arms ; or employed those arms, without the use of money ; your merit towards us, had been, doubtless, much greater, than it is at present.

I was not aware of my oversight 'till this moment ; but I have greatly mismanaged the conduct of my apology for you, in reserving, for the last, an allegation, to  
which,

which, as your attorney, I was obliged to plead guilty. The arrogant intimation you have given the public, of your having had the direction of his Majesty's counsels, for some time past, is wholly inexcusable: because, knowing it to be a most profound secret; as a cabinet counsellor, you certainly ought not to have disclosed it. Raillery apart, the extravagant futilities I have been pestered with, in the guise of arguments, upon a most plain and simple question, are so far from entitling the advancers of them, to be stiled reasoners; that they are so many violences done to reason: which is the essence of all *truth*. And thence, I presume, it is, that the Deity himself, according to the scriptures, is called *reason*.

To

To bring this motly narrative to a conclusion; I shall endeavour to requite my own labors, with the secret satisfaction of telling myself, you cannot but have observed, in the course of it, that my eyes have been upon you, for almost thirty years past: and, in consequence of this observation, that you have done me the justice likewise to notice, the manifest impossibility of one man's ingrossing the attention of another so long, without a considerable share of his regard. And to tell you true, I have not only loved you a great while, but in a peculiar manner. The capricious likings of persons of different sexes, are so very natural, and, besides, so common; that where they excite any wonder, the admirer himself is

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to



to be wondered at. But friendships, formed by a sympathetic attraction, and, as it were, an intuitive impulse, are not so frequent. And yet, it was by some secret influence of this sort, that you became at first possessed of my esteem. That this attachment was not wholly void of vanity and self love, I am ready to confess: my first propensity towards it, having arisen from seeing, or thinking I saw, great resemblance of myself in you.

I have, in the opening of this letter, made known, that I had formerly sat in parliament with you; and am at present lamenting, but chiefly upon your account, that I did not, in despite of my misusage, keep my seat there. In such a scene of action, you might have had more ample  
proofs



proofs of my friendship for you : because,  
 “ my deeds would have borne witness of  
 “ me.” And though the repeated checks  
 and traverses of an untoward fortune, had,  
 very long ago, exhausted my broken and  
 dejected spirit ; I should have found some  
 means, even in the capacity of one of  
 your mutes, to have occasionally done  
 you some little credit. Animated like-  
 wise by your example, that spirit of emu-  
 lation, which, in my younger days, I per-  
 ceived so active in my bosom, as almost to  
 disquiet it ; might have again taken place  
 there ; and, with a kind of elastic force,  
 created by its former pressures, sprung  
 with redoubled vigour. Ambition, that  
 inconsistent source of good and evil, had,  
 even at the University, taken root in me :  
 And if I was not grossly flattered there,

few, if any requisites were thought wanting in me, for the gratification of it. Yet, unfortunately, not being my own master ; by an arbitrary and perverse direction of my little talents afterwards, to a study most invincibly distasteful to me ; those gifts of nature degenerated into curses : and, like Narcissus's beauty, became the ruin of their possessor. — But it is neither safe, nor seemly, for an afflicted person, to expatiate over much, upon the subject of himself: I shall, therefore, no farther trespass on my reader.

Let me conjure you, finally, my good Sir, most firmly to sustain your pride : because I am experimentally convinced, that your pride will help to sustain *you*. I mean that virtuous pride, which dwells in every  
well

small form'd heart, a  
 passion belonging to  
 truth, a manly resolu-  
 tion & fortitude and if  
 the wrong we suffer  
 when the more frail  
 spirits are rising for  
 might otherwise, reap  
 of them. Rest contented  
 character you bear amongst  
 and  
*Nobility* imparted to you by your virtue -  
 which no worldly honour can equal, nor  
 any worldly power abate.

I must fervently wish your well being,  
 and the continuance of that being. Your  
 only

\* An expression of Juvenal's.

into, is having made  
that your only fault,  
, being too popular.  
ear their eyeballs.

F I N I S







